



Association of American Law Schools

April 25, 2018

**MEMORANDUM**

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TO: Council of the American Bar Association Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar

FROM: Judith Areen, Executive Director

SUBJECT: AALS Activities Report

This report summarizes the major activities of the AALS through April 2018.

Thank you to the Council and your Chair, Dean Maureen A. O'Rourke, Chair-elect, Dean Jeffrey Lewis, and Managing Director of Accreditation and Legal Education, Barry Currier, for your willingness to work with AALS on shared concerns of our organizations and constituencies.

**Overview**

Since the 2018 Annual Meeting in January, AALS has been working on planning the AALS Conference on Clinical Legal Education in Chicago, the AALS Workshop for New Law School Teachers in Washington, D.C., and the 2019 Annual Meeting in New Orleans. In addition, the association has been focused on research initiatives, enhancing faculty recruitment services, supporting AALS Sections, and continuing the work of communicating the innovations and accomplishments of law schools—and their students and faculty—through a variety of channels.

**Staff**

We are pleased to report that Professor Sean Scott has agreed to serve as the next Associate Director of AALS. She recently completed eight years of service as the academic associate dean of Loyola, Los Angeles Law School, where she has been a member of the faculty for more than 25 years. Her academic areas are race and law, gender and law, and disability rights. Her term will begin on August 15, 2018.

Jeff Allum became the first Director of Research at AALS on April 1. For the past year and a half, he has been a part-time consultant to AALS, and responsible for overseeing the Before the JD Project. In his new role, he will

continue to oversee *Before the JD* and related projects as well as developing a research agenda for the association.

### **The Before the JD (BJD) Project**

AALS staff have been working diligently on the *Before the JD* project in the run-up to the first published report from the initiative. Through a national survey of undergraduates and first-year law students, the project seeks to understand the factors contributing to the decisions of undergraduates to pursue a law degree or not. The survey, distributed in fall 2017, generated responses from thousands of undergraduate and first-year law students. Since that time, Gallup researchers have been conducting analyses of the data and working with AALS on a final report. Several groups have been involved in the review process including AALS staff, representatives from the project sponsors (including the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar), an academic advisory group, and a set of interested law school deans. The project remains on track to release a report written for law school deans this summer. Director of Research Jeff Allum presented a small segment of the findings at the National Association for Law Placement (NALP) Annual Education Conference in late April, the first of what we anticipate will be many presentations reflecting on select *Before the JD* aspects.

AALS intends to continue conducting analyses on the full *Before the JD* dataset with focus on topics that may be of particular interest to various audiences. The Association has been invited to present some *Before the JD* findings to the 2018 Summer Professional Development Institute of the National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals (NAGAP). Several academic disciplinary associations have expressed interest as well.